

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 CCO-00 /088 W

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FM AMEMBASUY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 9891

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TIRPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1873

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T (T H R O U G H O U T)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS.PINT MR

SUBJ: COUP D'ETAT IN MAURITANIA: CONVERSATION WITH ISMAIL OULD AMAR

1. AFTER LEARNING FROM WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR THAT NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL AND MINING COMPANY (SNIM) PRESIDENT

ISMAIL OULD AMAR HAD KNOWLEDGE OF COUP D' ETAT, I SPOKE WITH AMAR ON TELEPHONE. HE OPENED BY SAYING THAT HE HAD BEEN TRYING TO REACH US AND ADDED THAT, ALTHOUGH QUOTE NOT FULLY INFORMED UNQUOTE, HE WAS QUOTE QUITE WELL INFORMED UNQUOTE. HE MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. COUP WAS ABSOLUTELY BLOODLESS. ITS LEADER IS LT COLONEL MOUSTAPHA OULD MOHAMED SALEK, MILITARY CHIEF OF STAFF. (SEE NOUAKCHOTT CONFIDENTIAL

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447 FOR LATEST BIO DATA ON MUSTAPHA.)

B. PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH IS UNDER ARREST (AMAR EVADED MY QUESTION AS TO WHETHER OULD DADDAH WAS UNHARMED).

C. ALTHOUGH UNABLE TO LEAVE SFUM ENTIRELY, AMAR EXPECTS TO PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN NEW REGIME, PARTICULARLY IN ITS QUOTE ORIENTATION UNQUOTE. HIS USE OF LANGUAGE SUCH AS

QUOTE I ASSURE YOU UNQTE SUGGEST THAT HE WILL BE THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE IF NOT IN THE THRONE ITSELF.

D. IMPORTANT CHANGES WILL TAKE PLACE IN POLITICAL STRUCTURE, AND MAURIYANIA'S STANCE, BOTH INTERNALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, WILL BE AFFECTED. OVERALL THRUST OF CHANGE WILL BE IN DIRECTION OF INTERNATIONAL AND INTERNAL LIBERALIZATION, ESPECIALLY LIBERALIZATION OF ECONOMY. THIS WILL MEAN BETTER RELATIONS WITH WEST AND WITH U.S.

E. OULD AMAR EMPHASIZED THAT MILITARY COMMITTED IS TEMPORARY AND THAT THERE WILL BE NEW REUUUCAN REGIME WITH DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS WITHIN SIX MONTHS. SIX MONTHS REQUIRED BECAUSE OF NEED TO ESTABLISH RELIABLE VOTER LISTS WHICH, HE SAID, WERE TOTALLY INACCURATE. MEANWHILE THERE WILL BE CIVILIAN COMPONENT IN INTERIM MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH IT IS BOTH DIFFICULT AND EARLY TO SPECULATE ON MORNINGS EVENTS, FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS SUGGEST THEMSELVES:

A. ON BASIS OF VERY LIMITED INFORMATION, WE WOULD SAY THAT MAURITANIANS NOT MOURNING OULD DADDAH'S PASSING FROM SCENE. REACTIONS WE HAVE SEEN RANGE FROM PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE TO APPARENT RELIEF.

B. IF ISMAIL OULD AMAR PLAYS MAJOR ROLE IN NEW REGIME, IT MAY INDEED BE EXPECTED TO BE OF MODERATE, LIBERAL, EVEN RIGHTIST, VARIETY. AMAR IS FIRM BELIEVER IN CAPITALISM AND OPPOSED EARLY SOCIALISM OF OULD DADDAH REGIME.
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C. HOW RADICAL ELEMENTS AND BLACKS WILL ACCEPT WHAT APPEARS AT THIS JUNCTURE TO BE RIGHTIST, MORISH GOVERNMENT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

3. SIXTY-FOUR DOLLAR QUESTION IS, OF COURSE, HOW NEW REGIME WILL APPROACH SAWUYA WAR. MILITARY COMMITTEE'S INSISTENCE IN ITS COMMUNIQUE IT HAD ACTED TO PREVENT QUOTE DISMEMBERMENT UNQUOTE OF COUNTRY SUGGESTS THAT MILITANT APPROACH WILL CONTINUE. ALSO, MOUSTAPHA IS REGARDED AS COMPETENT OFFICER WHO WOULD PREUMABLY BE RELUCTANT TO TREAT WITH POLISARIO/ALGERIA. ON OTHER HAND, MAURITANIAN ARMY'S INABILITY TO SUPPRESS POLISARIO OPERATIONS IS MANIFEST, AND IT MAY BE THAT MOUSTAPHA CONCLUDED THAT NEW APPROACH NEEDED. FRENCH, WITH WHOM MOUSTAPHA IS VERY THICK, MAY HAVE REACHED SAME CONCLUSION, AND AMAR AS PRESIDENT OF SNIM IN EXCELLENT POSITION TO SEE HOW MUCH WAR IS COSTING MAURITANIA ECONOMICALLY.

4. SHOULD NEW REGIME'S COMMITMENT TO WAR WAIVER, SITUATION COULD BECOME VERY DIFFICULT. STATEMENT BY MOROCCAN INFORMATION MINISTER ON FRENCH RADIO TO EFFECT THAT MOROCCO WOULD TOLERATE REPLACEMENT OF ITS MILITARY CONTINGENT IN MAURITANIA BY FORCES FROM

ANOTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRY SUCH AS ALGERIA SHOWS GOM'S NERVOUSNESS.
NEW GOVERNMENT'S NEXT MOVES WILL BE WATCHED CAREFULLY IN MANY
QUARTERS. KRYZA

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